

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02 /088 W
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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0287
INFO AMEMBASSY DARESSALAAM
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, SREF, BC, RH, SF, AO, ZA, CG

SUBJECT: CURRENT STATUS OF REFUGEES IN BOTSWANA

REF: GABORONE 1432

SUMMARY: BOTSWANA CONTINUES TO STRUGGLE WITH PROBLEMS CREATED BY PRESENCE OF SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF RHODESIAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN REFUGEES. THERE ARE PERSISTENT RUMORS THAT FLOW OF RHODESIAN REFUGEES HAS DIMINISHED DUE TO SATURATION OF ZAMBIAN INSURGENT TRAINING CAMPS. RHODESIAN NATIONALIST DIFFERENCES ARE REFLECTED IN REFUGEE CAMP POPULATION, LEAVING MANY STRANDED IN BOTSWANA CREATING SEVERE PROBLEMS OF SHELTER AND PUBLIC HEALTH WHICH ARE SLOWLY BEING ALLEVIATED. SITUATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN AND ANGOLAN REFUGEES REMAINS BLEAK DUE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LACK OF JOB AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN BOTSWANA AND SLIM RESETTLEMENT PROSPECTS FOR ANGOLANS. END SUMMARY.

1. RHODESIAN REFUGEES: EMBASSY HAS RECENTLY RECEIVED SEVERAL REPORTS THAT NUMBER OF RHODESIAN REFUGEES ENTERING BOTSWANA, AS WELL AS NUMBER DEPARTING FOR INSURGENT TRAINING CAMPS IN ZAMBIA, IS SIGNIFICANTLY DECLINING.

REDUCED FLOW IS ATTRIBUTED PRIMARILY TO REPORTED CROWDING IN ZAMBIAN TRAINING CAMPS AND CONSEQUENT PROBLEMS INCLUDING RUMORED EPIDEMICS. ACCORDING TO THESE REPORTS, NKOMO RECRUITERS INSIDE RHODESIA HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT NO MORE TRAINEES CAN PRESENTLY BE ACCOMMODATED IN ZAMBIA AND THAT POTENTIAL RECRUITS SHOULD REMAIN IN RHODESIA FOR THE PRESENT.

2. DISCUSSIONS WITH GOB OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR REFUGEES, UNHCR REP IN GABORONE, AND UANC CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE FOR BOTSWANA DO NOT ENABLE US TO SUBSTANTIATE REPORTS OF REDUCED REFUGEE FLOWS. DURING JULY 15 CONVERSATION WITH ME, MR. O.J. TEBAPE OF PRESIDENT'S OFFICE STATED THAT FLOW OF RHODESIAN REFUGEES HAD BEEN REDUCED TO "TRICKLE". HOWEVER, FOLLOWING FIGURES (WHICH HE SUPPLIED) INDICATE THAT, WHILE REFUGEE POPULATION OF FRANCISTOWN CAMP HAS LEVELED OFF, NUMBER OF REFUGEES HOUSED AT SELEBI-PIKWE CAMP CONTINUES TO INCREASE:

FRANCISTOWN REFUGEE POPULATION:

JULY 4TH	5TH	7TH	11TH	13TH	14TH
575	722	624	553	582	575

SELEBI-PIKWE REFUGEE POPULATION:

JULY 4TH	5TH	7TH	11TH	13TH	14TH
45	45	215	446	574	627

UNHCR REP IN GABORONE TOLD DCM AND EMBOFF JULY 21 THAT NUMBER OF REFUGEES AT FRANCISTOWN HAS LEVELED OFF AT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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APPROXIMATELY 500-600 WHILE SELEBI-PIKWE CAMP POPULATION HAS RISEN TO APPROXIMATELY 1000.

3. ACCORDING TO GOB OFFICIAL TEBAPE, FRANCISTOWN CAMP CONTINUES TO HOUSE SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF SUPPORTERS OF FOUR RHODESIAN NATIONALIST LEADERS. HE PROVIDED FOLLOWING BREAKOUT OF POLITICAL ALLEGIANCES RECENTLY DECLARED BY FRANCISTOWN REFUGEES:

NUMBER OF DECLARED
SUPPORTERS AS OF JULY 14TH

NKOMO	124
MUGABE	158
MUZOREWA	114
SITHOLE	131

POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF REFUGEES IN SELIBI-PIKWE CAMP IS REPORTEDLY OVERWHELMINGLY PRO-PATRIOTIC FRONT.

4. EXCEPT FOR MUZOREWA AND SHITHOLE SUPPORTERS, RHODESIAN REFUGEES ARE IN BOTSWANA EN ROUTE TO INSURGENT TRAINING CAMPS IN ZAMBIA OR ELSEWHERE. THE SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR THE CHARTER FLIGHTS WHICH CARRY RHODESIAN REFUGEES TO ZAMBIA REMAIN UNCLEAR, BUT RUMORS

ABOUND THAT SOVIET AID TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT IS USED FOR THIS PURPOSE. OTHER RUMORED SOURCES OF MONEY FOR CHARTERS ARE THE SWEDES AND NORWEGIANS. WHATEVER THE SOURCE OF FUNDING, CHARTER FLIGHTS TAKE ONLY PATRIOTIC FRONT SUPPORTERS, WHILE MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE SUPPORTERS REMAIN STRANDED IN BOTSWANA CAMPS THEREFORE, CAMPS WHICH WERE MEANT TO HOLD ONLY REFUGEES IN TRANSIT HAVE BEEN FORCED TO ACCOMMODATE SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF MORE PERMANENT RESIDENTS. THE RESULTING SEVERE SHORTAGES OF SHELTER, SANITARY FACILITIES, BLANKETS, ETC. IN FRANCISTOWN CAMP HAVE ONLY RECENTLY BEEN SOMEWHAT ALLEVIATED. UNHCR REP TOLD US JULY 21 THAT ALL REFUGEES IN FRANCISTOWN NOW HAVE AT LEAST TENT ROOF OVER THEIR HEADS AND ADEQUATE BLANKETS AND OTHER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUPPLIES. UANC CHIEF REP FOR BOTSWANA, WHO IS RESIDENT IN FRANCISTOWN, RECENTLY CONFIRMED TO EMBOFFS THAT CONDITIONS HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED, BUT SAID A FEW MORE TENTS ARE NEEDED TO PROVIDE AT LEAST RUDIMENTARY SHELTER FOR ALL REFUGEES.

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R 270711Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0288
INFO AMEMBASSY DARESSALAAM
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5. SOUTH AFRICAN REFUGEES: ACCORDING TO GOB OFFICIAL TEBAPE, NUMBER OF SOUTH AFRICAN REFUGEES IN GABORONE AREA CONTINUES TO INCREASE FOR TWO REASONS: (A) RE-PRESSIVE SAG MEASURES AGAINST DISSIDENT STUDENTS AND (B) STRONG BELIEF OF SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS THAT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE BETTER IN BOTSWANA. UNFORTUNATELY, THESE HOPES ARE USUALLY FRUSTRATED BY SHORTAGE HERE OF EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS FOR REFUGEES. MOREOVER, MANY SOUTH AFRICAN REFUGEES PROVOKE WHAT UNHCR REP DESCRIBED AS "BACKLASH" AGAINST THEM AMONG BATSWANA WHO ARE PUT OFF BY THE HAUGHTY ATTITUDE AND OSTENTATIOUS SEPARATENESS OF THE REFUGEE STUDENTS. DURING JULY 21 MEETING WITH DCM AND EMBOFF, UNHCR REP EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR USG COMMITMENT TO BUILD TWO SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR LOCAL

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INHABITANTS (INCLUDING REFUGEES) AND NOTED THAT MENNONITES IN GABORONE HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO OPEN UNSPECIFIED "STUDY FACILITY" FOR 200-300 REFUGEE STUDENTS NEXT MONTH.

6. ANGOLAN REFUGEES: UNHCR REP ALSO DISCUSSED CONTINUING PLIGHT OF ANGOLAN REFUGEES IN BOTSWANA DURING JULY 21 MEETING. HE SAID APPROXIMATELY 90 (70 IN MAUN AND 20 IN GABORONE) ANGOLAN REFUGEES, MANY FORMERLY HIGH OFFICIALS OR WELL-KNOWN INTELLECTUALS, ARE STILL WAITING FOR PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT. UNHCR IS REPORTEDLY EXPLORING RESETTLEMENT POSSIBILITIES IN ZAIRE, ALTHOUGH GOZ ENTHUSIASM IS SAID TO HAVE DIMINISHED AS RESULT OF PREVIOUS ZAMBIAN REQUEST THAT ZAIRE ACCEPT 15,000 ANGOLAN REFUGEES NOW STRANDED IN ZAMBIA. ALTHOUGH MAURITIUS HAS AGREED TO ACCEPT SIX ANGOLAN REFUGEES AND SIMILAR SMALL COMMITMENTS MAY BE FORTHCOMING FROM NIGERIA, GHANA AND OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES, NO FURTHER PROSPECTS ARE ON THE HORIZON.

7. COMMENT: PRESENCE HERE OF A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF HIGHLY POLITICIZED (AND OFTEN BITTERLY FRUSTRATED) REFUGEES REMAINS BOTH AN UNWELCOME ECONOMIC BURDEN AND A POTENTIAL THREAT TO BOTSWANA'S INTERNAL SECURITY. WE LOOK FORWARD TO PROMPT RESOLUTION OF PROCEDURAL PROBLEMS (STATE 165736) THAT ARE DELAYING TRANSFER OF U.S. FUNDS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION (PARA 5 ABOVE) WHICH WILL BE OUR FIRST SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION,

ALTHOUGH INDIRECT, TO HELPING RELIEVE REFUGEE BURDEN.
I AM PLANNING TO VISIT FRANCISTOWN AND SELEBI-PIKWE
ON JULY 27, ACCOMPANIED BY EMBOFFS AND UNHCR REP, AND
WILL REPORT FURTHER ON SITUATION THERE.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition History: n/a
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